

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 10, 2005

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Based on the clear and continued need throughout the districts we represent, we respectfully request that you provide a significant increase in funding for our police officers and fire fighters in your Fiscal Year 2006 budget.

State and local first responders continue to express concern about being short-staffed. With the COPS program de-emphasized and, according to the National Fire Protection Association, at least two-thirds of the nation's fire departments understaffed, it is clear that force levels are down substantially and local communities have been suffering the consequences. Furthermore, the impact of Reserve and National Guard call-ups in Afghanistan and Iraq on local fire and police department staffs, as well as the homeland security demands on their services, are national concerns that have greatly effected local communities. At a time of elevated risk, it is unacceptable for our cities and towns to be put in a position where they may be forced to reduce the number of police on the streets, close fire stations, and dispatch emergency response vehicles with too few personnel. Unfortunately, if your Fiscal Year 2006 budget does not improve upon what was proposed last year, this is the reality they can expect to confront.

In FY2005, your administration requested no funding for first responder hiring, including COPS Hiring, within the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) at the Department of Justice. Likewise, your administration requested no funding for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters (SAFER) Grants, a program that assists fire departments in hiring personnel, within the Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) at the Department of Homeland Security. We cannot continue this downward trend. Minimizing our shared vulnerabilities and providing for the safety of our citizens require renewal of federal assistance to local communities for fire and police personnel needs.

As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2006 budget, we recommend significant funding for first responder hiring programs in OJP and ODP.

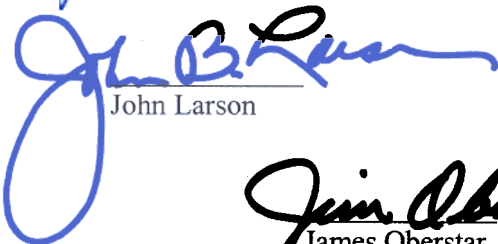
Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you in a bipartisan manner to ensure that our homeland is protected and its security is appropriately prioritized.

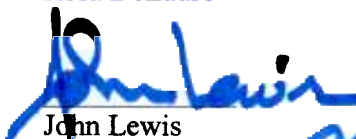
Sincerely,

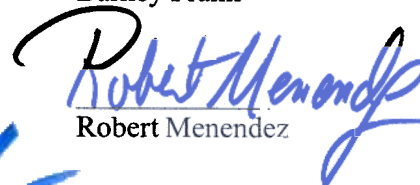

John F. Tierney


Rosa DeLauro


Barney Frank


John Larson


John Lewis


Robert Menendez


James Oberstar


Christopher Shays


Joe Baca

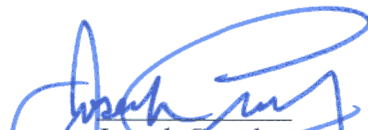

Tammy Baldwin



Earl Blumenauer

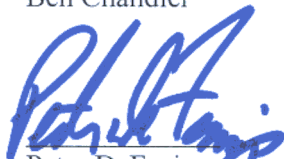

Michael Capuano


Ed Case

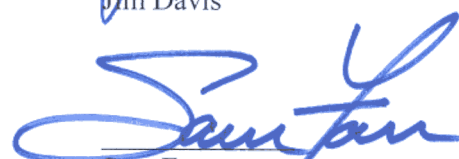

Ben Chandler


Joseph Crowley


Jim Davis

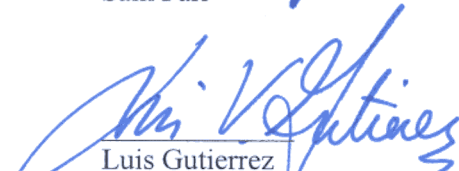

Peter DeFazio


William Delahunt


Sam Farr


Gene Green


Raul Grijalva


Luis Gutierrez



Stephanie Herseth


Brian Higgins


Tim Holden


Rush Holt


Jay Inslee


Eddie Bernice Johnson


Patrick Kennedy


Dale Kildee


Ron Kind

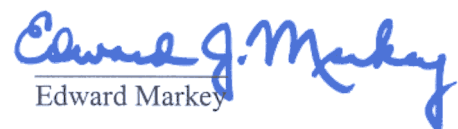

James Langevin


Barbara Lee


Sander Levin


Stephen Lynch


Carolyn Maloney

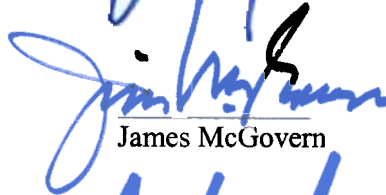

Edward Markey


Jim Marshall


Jim Matheson

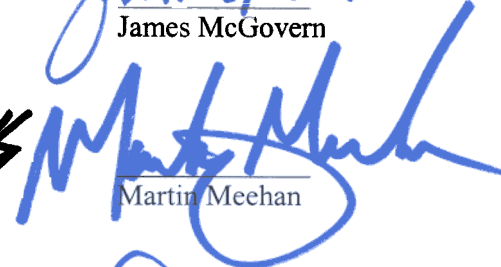

Betty McCollum


Jim McDermott


James McGovern


Mike McIntyre

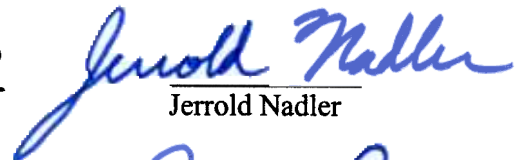

Michael McNulty


Martin Meehan


Michael Michaud


James Moran

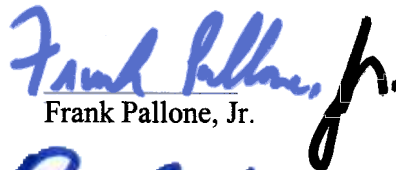

Dennis Moore


Jerrold Nadler


Grace Napolitano


Richard Neal

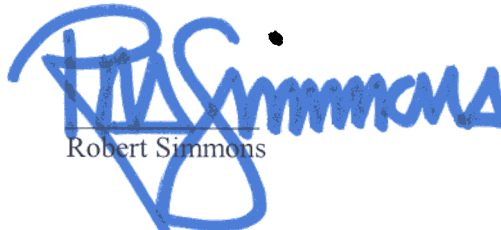

John Ober

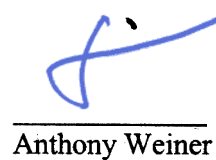

Frank Pallone, Jr.


Steven Rothman


C.A. "Dutch" Ruppberger


Bernard Sanders


Robert Simmons


Anthony Weiner


Robert Wexler